



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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Bottomfish fishery to receive \$1,000,000 in fishery disaster relief funds

As part of the Fiscal Year 2014 federal budget, Congress approved \$75 million in fishery disaster relief funds. Today, NOAA Fisheries announced that the bottomfish fishery will receive \$1,000,000. The allocation comes after the Department of Commerce declared six fishery disasters in 2012 and 2013.

In the Pacific Islands Region, a disaster was declared for the American Samoa bottomfish fishery. NOAA will work with the American Samoa government and those affected by the disaster to quickly allocate the funding.

"The bottomfish fishery is an important part of the fishing community in American Samoa," said Michael Tosatto, the Regional Administrator for Fisheries. "We will work with American Samoa government to address the impacts caused by a tsunami that caused major damage in the islands, including in Pago Pago Harbor, where much of the local fishing fleet is located."

Funding recipients will have broad latitude to determine the best use of the funds to meet the unique needs of their local businesses and communities. Funds can be used for activities that "restore the fishery or prevent a similar failure in the future, and to assist a fishing community affected by such failure."

There are a number of steps that have to take place before the money can be distributed. Funds are allocated through the federal grant process. NOAA Fisheries works with the recipients to develop spend plans and ensure that all statutory and grant requirements are addressed. We have determined that matching requirements do not apply to states, Councils and Commissions in this particular situation.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Commerce Secretary can declare a fishery disaster, which makes it possible for Congress to appropriate funds to provide economic assistance to fishing businesses and communities, including fishermen, affected by a disaster and to support other activities addressing the disaster.

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